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CHLOPAK LEONARD SCHECHTER
AND ASSOCIATES

Memorandum

To Department of Justice

From Chlopak, Leonard, Schechter & Associates
Registration number 5774

Date October 8, 2009

Re Distributing Press Release for Foreign Agents

The attached Press Release was sent out to members of the American Media and Think Tanks on October 8, 2009.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 8, 2009

CONTACT

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**Grand Mufti of Egypt: "Reject and Eradicate Violence and Extremism," Speaks out
Against Misconceptions of Islam**

*Sheikh Ali Gomaa addresses a full house at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced
International Studies, writes of reconciling Islam with modernity in Wall Street Journal*

WASHINGTON – Yesterday, in an event entitled, "The Challenge of Moderation in Islam: Egypt's Religious Institution Versus Extremism" the Grand Mufti of Egypt Dr. Ali Gomaa told a crowd of roughly 100 people that radicalism has no place in Islam. The event was co-sponsored by the Middle East Studies program at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies and the Religion and Peacemaking program at the U.S. Institute of Peace.

At the event, the Grand Mufti stressed the importance of understanding the true nature of Islam – a religion based on principles of peace, respect and moderation. He referenced the ease with which people can take messages from the Koran out of context, often interpreting these hallowed principles to mean the exact opposite of their original objective. He also answered questions on ways to promote moderation in Islam, how to combat terrorism and extremism in Islam and the Muslim viewpoint of terrorism and the West in a post-9/11 world.

Dr. Gomaa spoke about Egypt's experience in fighting terrorism since the assassination of the late President Anwar Sadat in 1981, describing a two-pronged strategy; religious leaders work to rehabilitate violent extremists while public campaigns are mounted to deny religious legitimacy to extremist ideology and acts of violence.

The Grand Mufti said in his speech, "I'm here to express myself and to state (these) realities that I know to be true and which I have written a great deal about, and I do this to get rid of a lot of the misconceptions that may be around about Islam and its realities so that we can together move forward and enter into true relations and dialogue between the East and the West."

Sheikh Gomaa continued to say, "The common ground that is shared between us is that we must respect human beings for their humanity. And for that reason we call to peace, and to rejecting and eradicating violence, and to rejecting and eradicating extremism."

In today's *Wall Street Journal*, Sheikh Gomaa writes that Muslims must "recommit to reinforcing the values of moderation in our faith" and called for the U.S. to "assume its responsibility for the sake of a better relationship between the West and Islam."

The Grand Mufti is in Washington, D.C. attending the Common Word conference at Georgetown University, the fourth major Muslim-Christian dialogue conference of its kind.

Dr. Gomaa was appointed Grand Mufti of Egypt, and head of Dar Al Ifta, Egypt's supreme body for Islamic legal edicts, in 2003 by President Hosni Mubarak, making him the senior interpreter of Islamic law in the country. He is active in global interfaith efforts, including the Common Word initiative launched by senior Islamic leaders in 2007, arguing that dialogue can dissolve barriers.

Dr. Gomaa has been a regular critic of interpretations of Islam that condone violence, and has written extensively on spirituality, prevention of violence, human rights, women's equality and peacemaking. The Grand Mufti greatly welcomed President Obama's speech in Cairo, which called for greater interaction to forge new relations between the Islamic world and the West. On that occasion, Dar Al Ifta issued a document entitled "Our Faith," explaining the basic tenants of Islam.

The document can be read at:

[http://www.modernegypt.info/userfiles/Dar%20Al%20Iftaa%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.modernegypt.info/userfiles/Dar%20Al%20Iftaa%20(1).pdf)

The full audio of the lecture and Q&A session can be found at <http://www.sais-jhu.edu/academics/regional-studies/middle-east/events.htm>

For more information on the Grand Mufti, please visit his official English Web site:

<http://www.aligomaa.net/index.html>

To read the full text Grand Mufti's Op/Ed in the Wall Street Journal please visit the following URL: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703298004574457452301729982.html>

This material is distributed by Chlopak, Leonard, Schechter & Associates on behalf of the Egyptian Press and Information Office. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice.

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The attached Advisory was sent out to members of the American Media and Think Tanks on October 8, 2009.

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INFORM. CHANGE. SOLVE.

October 8, 2009

Sheikh Ali Gomaa, Grand Mufti of Egypt stressed the ideals of a modern peaceful Muslim world in the *Wall Street Journal* today. He asked the United States to “confront the fear and misunderstanding” about Islam, strive to reinforce common principles while accepting the reality of differences in values, and commit to the rule of law as the “legitimate basis for international relations.”

Dr. Gomaa is one of the world’s preeminent scholars of Islamic Law. He presides over the Dar Al Ifta, Egypt’s supreme body for Islamic legal edicts, advising Muslims on how to abide by their faith in an enlightened manner while dealing with the changing circumstances of a modern world. This week he will be visiting Washington D.C. to attend a meeting of the Common Word, a global initiative to explore and promote the common ground between two great faiths: Christianity and Islam.

To read the full piece in the *Wall Street Journal*, click [here](#).

Islam, Israel and the United States

Peace among the Abrahamic faiths will be built on respect and the law.

By SHEIKH ALI GOMAA, WSJ, 10/8/09

America and the West have been victims of violent extremists acting in the name of Islam, the tragic events of 9/11 being only the most egregious of their attacks. Western officials and commentators are consumed by the question, “Where are the moderates?” Many, seeing only the extremism perpetuated by a radical few, despair of finding progressive and peaceful partners of standing in the Muslim world.

However, reconciling Islam with modernity has been an imperative for Muslims before it became a preoccupation for the West. In particular, the process dates back to the 19th century, when what became known as the Islamic reform movement was born in Al Azhar University in Cairo, Islam’s premiere institution of learning.

At the Dar al Iftaa, Egypt’s supreme body for Islamic legal edicts over which I preside, we wrestle constantly with the issue of applying Islam to the modern world. We issue thousands of fatwas or authoritative legal edicts—for example affirming the right of women to dignity, education and employment, and to hold political office, and condemning violence against them. We have upheld the right of freedom of conscience, and of freedom of expression within the bounds of common decency. We have promoted the common ground that exists between Islam, Christianity and Judaism. We have underscored that governance must be based on justice and popular sovereignty. We are committed to human liberty within the bounds of Islamic law. Nonetheless, we must make more tangible progress on these and other issues.

Yet, just as we recommit to reinforcing the values of moderation in our faith, we look to the United States to assume its responsibility for the sake of a better relationship between the West and Islam.

First, it is essential that the U.S. confront the fear and misunderstanding that has often pervaded the public discourse about Islam, especially in the media.

Second, while we must strive to reinforce the common principles that we share, we must also accept the reality of differences in our values and in our outlook. Islam and the West have distinct value systems. Respect for our differences is a foundation for coexistence, and never for conflict.

Finally, there must a true commitment to the rule of law, and to sovereign equality, as the legitimate basis for international relations. While some of the divide between Islam and the West lies in the realm of ideas, it lies mostly in the realm of politics. The violence and the aggression to which many Muslim countries have been subjected are the main sources of a deep and legitimate sense of grievance, and they must be addressed.

Israel's occupation of Palestine must be brought to an end; its continuation is an affront to the fundamental tenets of justice and freedom that we all seek to uphold. In Iraq and Afghanistan, full sovereignty and independence must be restored to their people with the withdrawal of all foreign forces. President Barack Obama's historic address to the Muslim world from Cairo on June 4 was a landmark event that opened the door to a new relationship between Islam and the West, precisely because it acknowledged these imperatives. Yet much work needs to be done by both sides.

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